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With the idea of providing a valid conditioning and testing situation by which the student's self-confidence and effectiveness in communicating in a foreign language could be improved, this study evaluates a pilot project designed to identify and measure the effects of having a native speaker in the classroom for a period of time as opposed to a situation not employing a native speaker. After proposing the experimental problem and hypotheses, this report, in a discussion of the assumptions upon which the study is based, considers the questions of student motivation, language proficiency, instructional objectives, and the language laboratory-native speaker relationship. After defining the terms essential to the understanding of the experiment, the report clarifies the roles of the teacher, student, and native speaker in the study. Explanations of the experimental design, interscorer reliability, and post-test findings precede an extensive commentary on experiment results based on observation and student evaluation. (AF)

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NATIVE SPEAKER PROGRAM: EVALUATION OF A PILOT PROJECT

by

D. B. Westcott

PROBLEM

If "communication" is a primary goal in language learning, then appropriate techniques need to be employed to magnify and to measure those factors which promote or impede it. The problem for this study is to provide a valid conditioning and testing situation which will improve the student's effectiveness of communication and also improve his self-confidence to communicate.

HYPOTHESES

For the purpose of statistical analysis the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. There is no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the control and experimental groups' effectiveness of communication.

2. There is no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups in self-confidence in their ability to communicate.

ASSUMPTIONS

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. that "communication" is a primary goal of language learning,

2. that there is no substitute for the actual experience of attempting to communicate with someone who does not speak your language,

3. that the above-mentioned experience can be created by deliberately bringing the student in contact with a native speaker of the target language,

4. that in spite of the artificial setting, the conversational situation is a valid test for the student because he does not know what the N.S. is going to say nor how he is going to react,

5. that the student is not regularly in contact with native speakers of his target language with the possible exception of his teacher,

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6. that his teacher by the very nature of her role as a teacher cannot function as effectively as a native speaker in the native speaker role,

7. that the extended use of a native speaker for the purpose of conditioning toward the student's goal of effective communication is of doubtful value before the fourth semester of the secondary level.

DISCUSSION OF ASSUMPTIONS

The following discussion is based on the premise that communication: should be a primary objective of language learning. The experimenter is in general agreement with the views expressed in Professor T. S. Lindstrom's article, Language: A Passport to People.

"Irrefutably, the ability to understand the classics in the writer's own idiom is one of the rewards for the time and effort spent in learning a language. But to consider this aim as a major guideline upon which language programs should be based within the framework of late 20th-Century American education is to ignore the student's immediate and concrete interest in the acquisition of a lingual skill for its own sake. To those of us who teach language as part of cultural behavior, reaching for mastery of the fundamentals, that is, the structure and the sound system with basic vocabulary annealed by modern techniques, the seminal purpose of language learning as a means of instant communication is something of a commonplace..."[1]

Professor Lindstrom's reference to "the student's immediate and concrete interest in the acquisition of a lingual skill for its own sake..."[2] needs exploration. How often is the student's opinion really taken into consideration when it comes time for the teacher to set up his course? How often does the teacher determine the actual content based on what "he" thinks the students should have? Perhaps the student's self-expressed interest is an avenue that should be followed more frequently. In actual practice the teacher is constantly deciding what is "best" for the student and "best" may take the form of "expedient," "necessary" or "realistic." The profession deplores the lack of student motivation yet is reluctant to provide those experiences which are of greatest interest to the student and therefore, logically, the best motivators.

There are several misconceptions which contribute to the situation. One is inherited. There has been an obvious and rather traditional concern for the "college prep" student who, from an equally traditional point of view, is the type of student most likely to take a language, or, to put it another way, the one who most likely will find some use for his high school time-effort investment. This has long been a stereotype, but perhaps it

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1 T. S. Lindstrom of Sarah Lawrence College, "Language: A Passport to People," Language Quarterly, The Chilton-Didier Foreign Language Newsletter, Vol. 6, No. 1 & 2, Spr/Sum 1968.

2 Ibid.

is time to revise the image of "the" foreign language student. There is a group in sufficient numbers that studies languages for reasons other than "college".

For example a survey of 80% of all language students then enrolled (Fall 1967) in French, Japanese, Russian and Spanish at The Kamehameha Schools indicated that while 45% were taking language for "college" reasons, another 40% were taking language out of interest or because they could see a practical application not related to college. While the figures were of interest, at first glance they appeared to emphasize such areas as college vs non-college. Looking deeper into the survey it was noted that the two supposedly divergent groups had something in common. Eighty-seven per cent (87%) of all responding language students stated that what they wanted most out of their language study was fluency in understanding and speaking their particular target language. This self-expressed desire for aural-oral competency in another language was supported by an also expressed, and realistic estimate of the time necessary to accomplish such objectives. Seventy-five per cent (75%) of those who replied to this question gave an average estimate of 3½ to 4 years as the length of time they thought it would take to accomplish their language objectives. These observations at Kamehameha tend to support Professor Lindstrom's implication that "the student's immediate and concrete interest..." must not be ignored.[3]

Another misconception is created by the false assumption that the student has indeed arrived, that he has acquired an adequate degree of fluency and proficiency when in fact he has never really been put to the test. Professor Lindstrom continues toward the ideal.

> "...This ability to move with immediate ease within the lingual patterns of another culture, to understand its humor, the various shadings of its attitudes and perspectives is to gain in mental stature and increase one's own confidence in dealings with the most variegated individuals and groups..."[4]

Unfortunately the student of foreign languages may have the "ability" but often does not have the "facility" "...to move with immediate ease within the lingual patterns of another culture..."[5] because he rarely is given the opportunity during his formal study to try out his new language skills except with the teacher or with other students in the classroom. His linguistic accomplishments are often described in terms of what the "tests" show. It is no wonder that he often lacks self-confidence in his own abilities. He has never been confronted with a live situation, that is, one in which he is obliged to come in contact and must attempt to communicate with a product of the particular culture and language he has been studying.

It is the profession which shys away from the goal of "communication" because it is "impractical", "impossible" or "unrealistic". Aside from the relatively short time alloted to language students, one of the arguments

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.

most often employed against "communication", both in and out of the profession, goes something like this: "Let's be realistic. How many of 'these' students will actually go to another country and use this language, or for that matter will ever come in contact with a native speaker?"

The question has a certain defeatist ring to it, a "Why bother?" or a compromise attitude of "Maybe we should settle for less?" As in any argument there are two sides. One side is betting that from a given group of language students very few will actually ever find themselves in a position to use the language. The other side is betting to the contrary, though in some cases the statistical odds are against him. That argument is never resolved. Neither is ever convinced to the contrary. Perhaps what should be raised here is the relevancy of such a question in the first place. The student who expresses the desire to speak and understand a language surely is not attempting to acquire a new "tongue" in order to speak to his present friends and acquaintances. He has expressed not only a desire to acquire certain linguistic skills needed in communication, but he has also committed himself to an assumption, or, if you will, assumed a commitment, similar to that stated above: "Since I am interested in learning how to speak and understand this language I am studying, I must also realize that its most direct application is going to be with a native speaker of that language, and whether I ever come in contact with a native speaker or not, I shall still find it most satisfying to me to have prepared myself for such an opportunity." Consequently, if the "student's immediate and concrete interest" is to be acknowledged, considered and if at all incorporated, then one is obliged to make such assumptions, and those who would agree with Professor Lindstrom that "...the seminal purpose of language learning as a means of communication is something of a commonplace..."[6] will ultimately be obliged to provide a valid conditioning and testing situation which in its most ideal form will necessitate the utilization of native speakers. Toward the encouragement and development of that end this project was conceived.

Advocates of the language laboratory may question the necessity or advisability of such a "supplement" by asking, "Can't the language lab provide the same situation?" Considering the monetary investment in some installations this could be a rather important question. The relationship of the lab to the N. S. may be more clearly understood through the observations of Dr. Wilga M. Rivers.

> "This element" (the pleasure reinforcement of making oneself understood in communication) "is lacking in a drill session or in the language laboratory where the tape cannot react with comprehension but can only give an opportunity for verification of the correctness of the response. Such verification may well be one of the student's current needs, and the laboratory practice period, like the drill, is of considerable value, but both must be supplemented by communication experiences where the desire to be understood is satisfied."[7]

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6 Ibid.

7 Wilga M. Rivers, The Psychologist and the Foreign Language Teacher, University of Chicago Press 1967, p. 34.

Actually such "communication experiences" should be considered as a complement to the language program, not as a supplement since the native speaker fills a void in the present program and cannot be as effectively duplicated by other elements of the existing program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

A "native speaker" (N.S.) is one whose mother tongue is that of the target language, the one being studied.

"Representative" means that the student is likely to experience approximately the same degree of difficulty or success with that N. S. as compared to most of the other N.S.'s of that linguistic region.

"Educated" does not necessarily mean literate or illiterate or that an individual has had an arbitrary number of years of formal education. Rather, it means something similar to the concept of being "representative." Educated would mean that his speech would not be considered substandard by his fellow N. S.'s and that he would be culturally familiar with the roles he would be expected to play and would use accurate and appropriate vocabulary even though that vocabulary differed somewhat from that which the student was in the habit of using.

"Non-technical" means more of a practical nature. For example, the student should be able to function effectively in expressing a need, such as being ill or having car trouble, even though he may not be familiar with all of the proper, technical terminology.

"Function effectively" means that the student will succeed in his efforts to communicate though his linguistic attempts may not be letter perfect.

"Communicate" means that he will understand and be understood by a N.S. Communication does not demand the absolute perfection of pronunciation and structural control nor an extensive vocabulary. However, the student who has the greater control of those elements is likely to function more effectively than the one who has less control of the same elements. This is an assumption since there are many spurious factors which may indeed have a decided effect on the effectiveness of one's communication such as parakinesics and language personality which pits the outgoing, extrovert type who may be more likely to respond to any social conversational situation against the introvert type who is not as likely to put his best linguistic foot forward without the right encouragement. These factors need to be acknowledged, but it is definitely beyond the scope of this paper to treat them in depth.

APPROACH

Teacher Role:

The teacher is still a teacher, and this role is abundantly clear to the student. The student reacts differently toward the teacher whom he sees daily than he does toward the N.S. whom he sees periodically. The N. S. does not

serve in the capacity of a teacher though some learning may take place indirectly. Each has his own functions and as little overlapping as possible should take place. The roles should not become confusing to the students.

The teacher, with his various techniques, approaches, "gimmicks," etc. develops with the student a problem solving "situation" which is logical and related to the student's framework of previous experience. Example: The student probably has had a cold before. When he gets the cold, he either goes to the doctor for diagnosis and prescription of medicine or goes to the drugstore for his own favorite cold remedy, or does both or some variation of the two. The situation is "real", since it has been experienced. The solution to the health problem is logical yet can be solved in a variety of ways, any of which would be satisfactory for this particular problem. There is no "one" solution. The need is reflected by the student as he attempts to describe his various symptoms. Vocabulary and appropriate structure is introduced as needed, rather than giving the student a preconceived "fixed" dialogue which is not always logical. Structure, it should be added, is a secondary concern since the student will, by the second half of the second level, have been exposed to a supply which should be adequate to meet his communication needs. Vocabulary is given to all students even though only one student may have asked for a particular word or expression. The student has a part in developing the situation, he feels more comfortable with it because it makes sense to him, he is guided by the teacher to avoid linguistic pitfalls and he does not have to memorize a "set" conversation since he has a variety of questions and replies from which he may draw. Interest is maintained partly because he had something to do with the project and partly because he has an almost immediate, though synthetic, need for THIS situation.

Student Role:

Within a given class all students are paired to develop their own logical doctor-patient dialogues. The two roles, i.e., doctor and patient, are developed simultaneously in an attempt to predict all logical directions the conversation may take. After some role playing practice each one switches to the opposite role. Then new pairs are formed and rotated until each student has had the opportunity to practice both roles with every other student in that class. The only restriction imposed is that they, individually or in pairs, must be able to function (communicate) effectively in either role with any other student. Until they can do this, paired practice continues. This restriction is essential, otherwise each pair may create its own "way-out" unique situation which by its very uniqueness would require different vocabulary. The teacher assists with appropriate vocabulary and structure, if necessary, that will be applicable to most of the dialogues. A situational dialogue of this limited degree of complexity can be developed in a class period or two (50 min. each) and practiced and mastered comfortably...and tested...in one week, i.e., five 50-minute class periods. Logic dictates the student's role as one with a need, a problem to be solved by linguistic means. The student practice role as a doctor is only for the purpose of anticipation of what the doctor is likely to say as well as to provide a live practice partner for the student-patient.

Native Speaker Role:

A N.S. is not necessarily a good teacher of his native tongue. However, he does have all of the linguistic habits built in. He is also a product of and therefore a reflection of the culture to which he belongs and may be expected to function "in character" when confronted by the non-native speaker (non-N.S.). In actual practice he would be requested to assume a variety of roles all of which might be considered as regional stereotypes associated with his particular culture. He would be himself first, then he might assume the role of the local mayor or municipal president, a merchant, the priest or other religious leader, a doctor, or teacher or farmer of any of the female counterparts if a female N.S. is available. Such roles would be jointly decided upon and developed through consultation with the N.S. Students would attempt to relate to these various roles by employing such techniques as interviewing or their own role playing.

The N.S. would serve a dual role. The conversationalist role-player with the built in linguistic patterns set in the context of his native culture is one. The other is a means of evaluation. The N.S. becomes a sounding board, a reactor to the non-N.S. and frequently a more objective judge than is the classroom teacher. His second function then would be as an evaluator.

When the student has sufficiently exercised his "situation" he then performs with any partner picked at random from the class. If this is satisfactory, then the N.S. is introduced in the doctor's role, never as the patient. The N. S. is primed as little as possible in order to reduce the artificiality of an already laboratory type setting. He is told that he is to play the role of the doctor and that students, individually or in pairs, will come to him for medical assistance. He is to reply and to react accordingly and prescribe as logically as he can under the circumstances. He does not know what the student is going to say beforehand. He is not coached to "avoid" certain structures or vocabulary, but only to react as he would if he were in that particular role in his own country and was approached by someone who obviously spoke Spanish as a second language. No English is to be spoken by either student or N.S. during a test situation. The conversation is recorded (tape recorder under the table with a mike protruding through a hole in the table). The class retires to the language lab for related practice either on tape or among themselves. One student (or a pair) at a time attempts to solve his particular linguistic dilemma in a period of 5 and not more than 10 minutes. When the student leaves, the N.S. gives him or her a rating on a 1 to 5 (one is low) Effectiveness of Communication" scale. The N.S.'s only concern is to give that student a rating based on an all encompassing concept of "How effectively does this student communicate?" or "How well does he solve or attempt to solve his linguistic problem?" The N.S. does not rate such specifics as pronunciation, verb control, vocabulary, etc.

PROBLEM SITUATIONS

The problem situations developed during that semester and which served as conditioning for the Native Speaker Project were: 1) doctor-patient (patient has a cold or other minor ailment), 2) employee-customer in a drug-store, 3) mechanic-motorist with car trouble (flat tire, dead battery, hole in the radiator, wipers not working, etc.), 4) clerk-guest (arrange for lodging in hotel (bath, meals, etc.), 5) waitress-diner (order an appropriate meal (depending on the time of day), pay for it, etc., and 6) ticket agent-traveler (arrange for transportation). Each required about the same length of time to develop, practice and test. Each of these was basically a non-conflict situation, i.e., the student would go to the ticket office and make arrangements for transportation which involved his destination, ticket class, luggage, flight number, seat number, meals, cost, etc. and eventually get what he went for. An extension of the same basic dialogues is the conflict situation in which there is placed an unpredictable frustration factor. The student is informed by the agent that there are no flights at the hour he wishes to leave or that a particular flight has no available space or the mechanic does not have the necessary car part. This added complication is given to the more advanced student but also to all students as soon as possible. It obliges him to make some unexpected changes in his carefully laid linguistic plans. He is free to make whatever other arrangements he wishes as long as he satisfactorily solves his problem. The motto is "expect the unexpected", a reminder which should be frequently inserted and especially prior to the confrontation with the N.S. The idea, however, is to encourage flexibility, not create frustration.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Although this was only a pilot project with limited goals, there was an opportunity to anticipate the type of experimental design that might be used in attempting to identify and measure the effects of having a N.S. in the classroom for a period of time as compared to the classroom not employing a N.S. While there were three different levels of Spanish students involved in this project (second semester of Spanish I, II and III), for experimental purposes a non-N.S. second level class was involved as a control group. The control and experimental groups (second semester Spanish II classes only; one class of 12 and the other of 21) were statistically equated by as many variables as possible. The statistical technique employed was to find out if there was any statistically significant difference in the means of the two groups at the .05 level of confidence. The variables deemed most relevant a n d which were pretested and post-tested were the verbal and nonverbal scores of the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Test, the Listening Comprehension (also the Reading and Writing parts) of the Modern Language Association (MLA), an interest rating used as a reflection of motivation, (self-rating on a 1 to 5 scale and a teacher rating of observed interest on the same scale), Oral Proficiency Ratings by the teacher, Academic grade in language, etc. The means for each of these variables were computed and compared using the following formulas:

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma(X_1 - M_1)^2 + (X_2 - M_2)^2}{N_1 + N_2}}$$

$$SE_D = \sigma\sqrt{\frac{N_1 + N_2}{N_1 N_2}}$$

$$t = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{SE_D}$$

The above process means that the sums of the squares of the differences from the means were used to arrive at a pooled standard deviation which in turn was necessary for computing the standard error of difference between means. The final step was to use the "t" test to find out if there actually was a statistically significant difference in the means of the two groups being compared. This technique is a convenient device for ascertaining whether or not the two groups have been equated in all relevant variables. It also serves as a post-test to identify any significant difference which may have taken place since the experiment began. In this case there was no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence on any of the variables mentioned above except MLA Reading which was biased in favor of the control group. It may indicate a more extensive active or passive vocabulary for that group. For all practical purposes it could be stated that both groups were representative of the same population.

INTERSCORER RELIABILITY

The use of rating scales to measure objectively a rather subjective concept is usually subject to some question as to the reliability of such an instrument or as to how consistent are the judges who use it. Whenever a "homemade" instrument is employed, its validity should be verified. A basic assumption is that the users of this instrument are qualified observers. The difficulty of maintaining a consistency (reliability) between raters is an age old problem. Frequently, the interscorer reliability shows a low, inconsistent "r" (correlation). To train a "judge" or judges by conditioning them to the criteria has merit but this step by itself is still not reliable. Each judge has a built-in measuring stick. It is a reaction to the stimulus or combination of stimuli. It is often more effective not to disturb the equilibrium of the rater but rather to use a number of judges and take an average of their ratings. This was attempted on the final oral testing situation. The only reminder for the N.S. to consider was "How effective was this student in conveying to you his needs and in understanding your replies?" The 1 to 5 scale with 1 being "ineffective" and 5 being "quite effective" was a simple way out. The raters simply marked a point on the scale between these two extremes. The teacher also gave ratings, independently, which were later correlated with those of the N.S. judges.

POST-TEST

The final evaluation (post-test), to be valid, had to involve a judge or judges who had had no previous contact with the project. A pair of judges were selected who were "educated" native speakers, a man and a woman from Guatemala and Panama respectively. Students were paired and given a combination of language problems or situations to solve. Example: "your car needs repairs (hole in the radiator). Take it to a garage and arrange to have the necessary repairs made. Then find out where the nearest hotel is, go there and arrange for a room, bath, meals, etc. for the next three days." The responsibility for the double situation (i.e., two problems to solve) was divided between the two students. The N.S.'s were given a copy of the student problem and directed to play the part of the mechanic and the hotel clerk. They were told to reply to the student's requests and to react accordingly, not to use English and cautioned not to be overly generous with their ratings if they did not feel the student deserved it. The students had never seen nor heard these N.S.'s before. Theoretically those in the experimental group should have had an advantage. All conversations were recorded. Ratings were given by the N.S. as requested. Also ratings were given by the teacher afterwards when listening to the tape. The interscorer reliability was correlated.

EVALUATION

It was mistakenly assumed that the student must surely have had a reasonable amount of exposure to Latin culture through his courses in social studies and previous language classes. However, an unusual amount of prior cultural (geographical as well as social) conditioning was necessary, the Latin frame of reference being so new. It was an ideal opportunity to broaden the student's cultural orientation. Perhaps a team-teaching approach or cross-discipline cooperation could be planned to provide the necessary background.

Not all of the N.S. time was spent on problem situations. For the first few visits a less structured type of approach was pursued but with only limited success. In spite of identifying common conversation topics for both in-class and out-of-class preparation, there was a conspicuous lack of student self-involvement.

One of the NSP assumptions was that the use of a N.S. in the classroom would probably be more effective toward the end of the second half of the second level. The negative psychological reactions of the level-one students and the "weaker" level-two students tend to substantiate this assumption. At first a few were overwhelmed. They reacted with humor and rudeness which, had it occurred in a Latin environment, would have been rather insulting. This gave way to obvious frustration. The frustration split two ways, one of redoubled effort to overcome the problem, the other of discouragement at not being able to cope with it and was followed by a marked reduction in effort, a "turning off" or a "giving up". The hesitation of most students in speaking or in attempting to contribute something was apparently a fear of being wrong for some and not wishing to disappoint the teacher.

Frequently they would not risk being wrong. The peer group, the teacher and the N.S. all exerted certain pressures. What affects one does not necessarily affect another. If one were to state a conclusion based on these reactions, one might say that there is a delicate balance between linguistic success and failure which is acutely felt as it moves away from the fulcrum in either direction. It is the old pleasure-pain principle with recipients being hypersensitive either positively or negatively. Failure to communicate is not just "bad" it is "very bad." (student self analysis). Success is not just "good", it is "very good," even worth getting excited about. If this conclusion is justifiable, it would also suggest that unnecessary hazards may be placed in the student's path which may actually be detrimental if the N.S. is introduced prematurely into the total program, or if the student has not had adequate conditioning. There is a certain readiness, psychologically. How to identify that ideal moment remains for further study.

The "Hawthorne" or "halo" effect was most likely present though there is no evidence of it in the experimental group. They seemed to take the N.S.'s presence quite in stride. The control group knew that the "other" class had been receiving visitors though they did not know any details. There were comments such as "Why can't we...? (have visitors, etc.) When the final evaluation (oral) took place, neither group knew that they would have to perform in the presence of a new N.S. (two at that!) whom they had never met. The experimental group performed in a manner consistent with what had been their performance during the project, that is, they were not greatly disturbed by the realization that they would have to produce with a live speaker. One might have expected that the control group, not having had any previous conditioning, might have been somewhat shocked at the same prospect. Such was not the case, however, since most of them seemed to rise to the occasion. The conditioning process appears to have been adequate for the problem situations attempted.

When one group was engaged in conversation, the other group was in another room practicing. No matter how well prepared the groups were the day before, invariably the group which prepared during the first half of the period was noticeably more effective in its communication efforts than was the group which started in immediately with the N.S. The possibility of an imbalance between "weak" and "strong" students was offset by regrouping. Even "stronger" students were less effective when they had to perform first. This would suggest that a short preparation period for both groups immediately before their conversations with the N.S. would be beneficial at least in the earlier stages of conditioning. However, this concession may run the risk of being a "crutch" for the student who did not prepare outside of class.

Student evaluations indicated that they felt more at ease when working with the same 5 or 6 individuals regularly than when the groups were reshuffled. It did not matter who the individuals were in the group as long as they were the same ones each time.

The proposal suggested the visits of the N.S. should be regular, not intermittent, and that once a week was expected to serve the purpose of conditioning. There were to have been 16 visits by a variety of N.S.'s. Due to the uncertainty of the project, it was decided that one N.S. would be engaged so that as few individuals as possible would be disrupted if it were not possible to continue. Also, the particular N.S. was a very ideal "representative" native speaker who was well suited to the project. The number of visits was reduced to 10 instead of the expected 16 due to numerous conflicting school activities which often involved shortening, shifting or omitting class periods which had been anticipated as being available when the project was proposed.

The acoustics of the classroom were certainly less than desirable for a language class much less a recording facility. The musical accompaniment from the choral rooms was added competition.

Often our recording devices was not in the best of condition. More than once it was necessary to switch recorders during a conversation because the first was malfunctioning. Reliable equipment and a room for competition-free recording are strongly recommended.

There was some experimentation with the size of the conversation groups. As anticipated in the proposal, the conversational setting rapidly changed as the groups increased in size beyond 5 or 6. By the time the groun size had reached 12, the desired conversational aspect had all but disappeared and a lecturer-audience atmosphere replaced it.

Student Evaluation:

The following are comments by students in the experimental groups. These comments were solicited two days after the final oral evaluation had taken place.

Level 1 students:

1) "I was puzzled and lost a good deal of the time, but I learned how to handle it eventually."

2) "A native speaker helps me develop my listening habits and comprehension as well as vocabulary."

3) "I feel that his coming was worth while. Being able to communicate with a N.S. gives more reality to the situation than just conversing with each other. The only harm I can think of is his rapid speaking and the presence of the microphone."

4) "...the native speaker was beneficial in coming into the classroom. For me, I know it caught me within an actual communication situation. It was hard at first to express myself, because basically I think it was more from embarassment than fear..."

Level 2 students

1) "The use of the native speaker is good. It is too bad that we could only have one..."

2) "A native speaker lets us evaluate ourselves."

3) "...After all, the purpose of taking a language is to speak it fluently. I got a lot out of it." Ninety-five per cent (95%) of the comments were favorable. The only negative comments came from two girls (one in Spanish I and one in Spanish II) who admitted that they "didn't take advantage of all the opportunities to practice."

Most of the constructive criticism encouraged the continuation or expansion of this or a similar project but suggested having a variety of native speakers. They wanted to keep the conversation groups the same size, i.e., 5 or 6. The frequency of visitation, once a week, was just about right for the second and third level groups but a little too often for the first level who, doubtless, needed more time to prepare the same material since they were lacking in vocabulary, structure and experience.

The two areas of greatest interest as reflected by the null hypotheses were 1) effectiveness of communication and 2) self-confidence to be able to communicate with a native speaker of the target language. In an effort to measure any possible change since the beginning of the project a number of variables were observed, measured and compared between groups. Among these were 1) Teacher rating of effectiveness of communication, 2) Native Speaker Judges' ratings of effectiveness of communication 3) Listening Comprehension post-test, 4) and Student Self-confidence ratings. None of the above showed significance at the predetermined .05 level. However, the listening comprehension post-test and the teacher ratings of effectiveness of communication did show significance at the .10 level. Even discounting the possible bias of the teacher the listening comprehension appeared to be at least noticeably different. This is not to suggest that one should be less demanding of high standards or settle for less. Rather it suggests that further investigation in this area may be warranted, especially in view of the reduction in the number of N.S. visits.

The investigator's own opinion is that the project has merit, that it is worth reinvestigating...in depth, but with even tighter controls. In a more refined state the Native Speaker Project should eventually become an integral part of the language program.

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